

GOD'S Holy Spirit is upon the Church,
the Righteous shall be saved by the Grace of God.

140.

FUNERAL SERMON,

Occasioned by the Death of

REV. MR. JOHN HUGHES.

Who departed this Life, May 29, 1773.

Delivered on Sunday, June 6,

TO THE CHURCH OF

UNITED PROTESTANT CHRISTIANS.

BY THOMAS CHORLTON,

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wark.

MDCCLXXIII.

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GOD'S HARVEST gathered in before the storm: Or
the Righteous taken away from the World to come.

A

FUNERAL SERMON, ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following sermon would have been published much sooner, had not the author been hindered from transcribing it for the press, through infirmity of body, and the same time being daily engaged in the instruction of youth; and having generally five sermons a week to deliver to the dear people of his charge. And as he never makes use of any notes in his public ministrations, those that were present when this discourse was preached, may observe some parts of it are enlarged, but it is hoped every one will plainly discover the substance is the same from first to last. It is published at the best time, if God is pleased to grant his blessing to it. Reader, it is of small concern, what are thy thoughts, of the author; but it is of the greatest importance what thou thinkest of Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.

May the Holy Spirit manifest him to thee as thy wisdom, sanctification, righteousness, and eternal redemption! Amen.



T O
Mrs. MERCY HUGHES,
The worthy RELICT of
My dear and honored FRIEND
The late Reverend Mr. JOHN HUGHES,
THIS DISCOURSE
Is respectfully inscribed,
As a sincere affectionate TOKEN
Of tender Sympathy with Her,
And venerable Regard for the Memory
And Character of the Deceased,
By her most obliged
Humble Servant,
THOMAS CHORLTON.

Snows-Fields, Southwark,
July 9, 1773.

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BELOVED CHRISTIANS,

I THIS day find it is much easier to assist a friend when living, than to stand in his place when dead. I am present with you in weakness, in fear, and much trembling. But, as it was the request of your late worthy pastor, that I would perform this solemn office among you, instead of making any apology for my unworthiness, (under a sense of which, I hope I am duly affected) permit me to become an humble supplicant for your prayers, that the great Master of Assemblies would, by his Divine Spirit, be present both with me and you; that in this house of mourning, our souls may feast on heavenly food, experiencing a blessing from what shall be delivered from the words your pastor when living chose, and which, in the sacred volume of revelation, stand recorded,

ISAIAH LVII. part of the first verse.

The Righteous is taken away from the evil to come.

MANY are the awful providences Almighty God displays to a careless world; many the awakening calls he sends to the churches of his grace. And among those we daily see and hear of, I know none that calls for a more serious attention, than the present, which you of this Christian assembly now experience.

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Judgment seems to begin at the house of God; but Mercy, I trust, is intermixed with it in so salutary a manner, that you will find even this awful event included among the things that work together for good to them that love God, and are the called according to his purpose.

The removal of God's people, that have in their day and generation been eminent for piety and usefulness, has by the faithful in all ages been considered as matter of real sorrow and concern, especially when called away in time of Jacob's trouble and calamity; when to human reason it appears as if they might have been spared at any future period of time rather than the present. And, doubtless the great Author of our frame, not only *permits*, but *expects* such dispensations of his providence to be seriously laid to heart; witness the examples recorded in his holy word; * for every child of God is a blessing to the world: hence in scripture, the saints are called "the excellent of the earth;" which though applicable to all believers, is more especially true of the ministers of the everlasting gospel, they being ambassadors for

* As perhaps some of my readers may not know the places of sacred writ where such instances occur, I beg leave to refer them to the solemn mourning made for good old Jacob, the representative of the true Israel of God, Gen. l. 10. and trust it will not be thought improper to introduce the translation of the prophet Elijah, which, though to him a peculiar honor, yet was by his venerable successor, Elisha, considered as a sore judgment against Israel in general, and a great loss to himself in particular, as his lamentation and behavior, when he saw him taken up to heaven, plainly evidences, 2 Kings ii. 12. Nor is the New Testament of our Lord and Saviour silent on this head; for after pious Stephen was stoned to death by his bloody persecutors, we read devout men carried Stephen to his grave, and made great lamentation over him; lamented his death as a universal loss to the church of Christ, and thereby also bore a testimony of his memory, being precious in their esteem.

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God, "the light and salt of the earth," and made instrumental in the conversion of the world that lies in wickedness, their usefulness among mankind perfuming their very dust, and is a monument more durable than that of burnished brass, or polished marble; while, on the other hand, an ungodly man scarce merits the tribute of a tear, being a plague and curse to himself and others when living, and is soon forgotten when dead. An assertion which stands supported by divine authority, "the memory of the just is blessed, but the name of the wicked shall rot," Prov. x. 7.

It must indeed be granted, the followers of Christ are no favourites with the carnal (though generally called christian) world; nor is it to be wondered at, since their Lord and Master has declared the world will love its own; but because his disciples are not of the world, therefore the world hateth them. And the sacred historian asserts, that Jesus Christ was, even after his death and burial, called a *deceiver*, Matt. xxvii. 63. No wonder then his standard-bearers, after their departure out of life, are by a censorious world called by the same name. Nor is this any thing novel; for if you look at the former part of the verse, out of which our text is taken, you will see this was *in general* the case in the days of the prophet Isaiah; "the righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart, and merciful men are taken away, none considering," &c.

I shall not stand to comment on the words, as the bare reading of them is sufficient to prove that an ungodly careless world has, in all ages, been unconcerned about the death of the best of men, notwithstanding it is a presage of awful judgments near approaching. But, though mankind in general consider not the works of the Lord, nor the operation

of his hands, I have reason to believe this is not the case with you, my brethren; for I discern with some the tender springs of nature are already at work; and shall now endeavour a more particular improvement of the words before us. "The righteous is taken away from the evil to come:" and I conceive a short description of the character and experience of the person held forth, "the righteous," with a particular consideration of what is said relating to his departure out of this world to a better, will be matter sufficient to employ our meditations, till it is time to illustrate the subject by the living experience and happy death of him whose removal from us we now lament, which, accompanied with an affectionate address to the different states of this mournful assembly, will, I hope, be profitable to all our immortal souls. Amen, so be it, Lord Jesus.

Every true christian values and prizes the word of God "as a lamp unto his feet, and a light unto his paths," while sojourning in this wilderness below; and all such cannot but know that this term, "the righteous" often occurs in scripture, and glorious things are spoken of, and promised to, persons of that excellent character. But, alas! few of the sons of Adam are partakers of the privilege, for by nature there is none righteous, "no not one." The crown is fallen from the head of all mankind; and if any of the apostate race arrive at glory, it is entirely owing to the free and sovereign grace of God. Righteousness is one of the essential attributes of Jehovah, from which he cannot deviate. Righteousness is the plan of all his works, he being righteous in all his ways, and holy in his works, in perfect conformity to which, we read, "God made man upright." Righteousness was a continual resident in Adam's breast before his fall; but when Guilt entered, Righteousness took her flight to heaven, nor did she ever revisit Earth again, till

till Jehovah our righteousness, the Lord Jesus Christ, God over all, blessed for ever, came down: came down, not at his birth in Bethlehem, but in the gracious promise given in paradise, "the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head," Gen. iii. 15. When our first parents by breaking the righteous holy law of God, found by the experience of evil they had entirely lost the knowledge of all *good*, it pleased the Father of all mercies to open the secret of the covenant of grace, made with his chosen before the foundation of the world, and at this happy æra it might with the greatest propriety be said, "mercy and truth met together, righteousness and peace kissed each other," Psalm lxxxv. 10.

The infallible records bear this testimony, that "by the disobedience of one many were made sinners;" and experience in the practice of mankind plainly demonstrates the carnal mind not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. The law of God being holy, just, and good, and every imagination of the heart of man being *evil*, only *evil*, and that continually; hence the necessity of the new birth which our blessed Saviour taught the master in Israel, evidently appears; "for without holiness no man can see the Lord," Heb. xii. 14. nor would the presence of God in glory be any ways delightful to an unregenerate mind; the language of such a one would be the same in heaven as it is on earth, "depart from me, I desire not the knowledge of thy ways." So that, my dear friends, if any of you are partakers of the character held forth in the text, God the Holy Ghost, by his divine energy, has convinced you of the evil of your state by nature, that "from the sole of the foot to the crown of the head there is nothing in you but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores, the whole head being sick, and the whole heart faint;" that being carnal and sold under sin, the law of God

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proclaims you cursed; and you have been led to see your "righteousness (what you once thought excellent) to be as filthy rags;" and hence your thoughts are changed agreeable to the word of truth, "the thoughts of the righteous are right," Prov. xii. 5. not by nature, but by grace. The general part of the christian world think they are in the way to heaven, shall die in peace, and get safe to glory, though lovers of pleasure, haters of God, and strangers to Jesus the way, the truth, and the life. They, unhappy mortals, think prayer a needless ceremony, and therefore rise in the morning, and go to rest in the evening worse than the beasts that perish; or if there is any need of supplicating heaven, they imagine it is time enough when on a dying bed, and in the views of eternity; that a friendly visit from the minister, or some kind friend, accompanied with prayer in their behalf, will entitle them to the inheritance of the saints in light. Well might the wise man say, "the righteous is more excellent than his neighbour," Prov. xii. 26. for having the eyes of his understanding opened, he sees the exceeding sinfulness of sin, that all his efforts to deliver himself out of this miserable state are in vain; that an infant of a day may as well pretend to the strength of a giant, as he in his present depraved state pay obedience *to*, or expect salvation *from*, the law of works; for "by the law is the knowledge of sin." In this situation the Spirit of God discovers to him the righteousness of God, as manifested and held forth in the life and death of Christ, for his justification from the curse of the law and punishment for sin; for in his name, "whosoever believeth is justified from all things," from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses; the sacred Spirit, who always testifies of Christ, discovers to him the glories of the everlasting covenant, the tenor of which is directly contrary to the faithfulness or righteousness of man, expressly saying,

ing, "I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more," Heb. viii. 12. These are words exactly suited to his case; he has been greatly distressed (perhaps) in seeking to procure a righteousness for which God might be merciful to him; and having sought the living among the dead, he, by faith of the operation of God, finds himself an heir of eternal life; chosen in Christ his head; from all eternity Jesus is all in all to his soul; his language is like that of the apostle Paul after his conversion from a proud Pharisee to an humble christian, "yea doubtless I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having on mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith," Phil. iii. 8, 9. This is the righteous man, accepted through the Beloved; this is he of whom the world is not worthy, whose life is by faith in the Son of God. "Old things are done away; behold all things are become new;" his prejudices against religion are turned to approbation, his hatred of God and his people to love and delight, his former companions and friends are exchanged for those more noble; where he formerly did hurt, he now endeavors to do all the good

* Should the reader be desirous of seeing a more copious description of the inward workings of a mind sensible of guilt, and seeking ease by the deeds of the law, as also the glorious deliverance it finds through the righteousness of the God-man, applied by the Holy Spirit to the burdened conscience, together with the salutary effects it has on the christian's life and conversation, I am glad of this opportunity to recommend to his perusal a small treatise, entitled, "The Death of Legal Hope the Life of Evangelical Obedience," by Abraham Booth; and sold by Dilly in the Poultry.

he can; and when he can help his fellow creatures no other way, he will do it by earnest prayer to God in their behalf.

“The remnant of the Lord (says the prophet) shall be as dew,” Micah v. 7. intimating, that the counsel, example, and prayers of the righteous man should be a general blessing to all around him. And here it may not be amiss to consider a little the other description of the righteous man’s character. He is a merciful man; merciful not only to the body, but the souls of men, having obtained mercy through the righteousness of Christ imputed to him for justification of life; his heart is drawn out in acts of love and kindness to his fellow mortals. So that all his relative stations with men he is desirous may be filled up to the glory of God, who has called him to holiness and virtue. As a parent, he not only thinks it necessary to provide for the natural welfare of his paternal charge, but also for their immortal souls; and as such, leads his household in the use of those ordinances God has appointed. As one called to be a member of society, he renders to all their due; and though it may frequently fall to his share to be deceived by the fair speeches of others, he will not make this a plea of dealing so with them. Amidst the various afflictions and temptations he experiences, this yields him real comfort, this world is not his rest; that, being a stranger and pilgrim, as all his fathers were, he looks for a better country, that is an heavenly. And though he finds in many things he daily offends, yet knowing he has an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, he walks humbly with his God, waiting till his change come. And this brings me to the next particular held forth in the text, namely, to consider what is spoken of him relative to his departure out of life; “The righteous is taken away from the evil to come.”

Death

Death is the common lot of all men. The grave the house appointed for all living. The sceptered monarch and the ragged beggar are both alike the subjects of mortality. Death, all-conquering death, derives his power from sin, and sin claims absolute dominion through a broken law: therefore, says an inspired writer, "The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law." The solemn decree cannot be reversed, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Hear this, my fellow mortals; and may the Lord enable you to apply your hearts to wisdom! Dying is an awful work, and what you and I must soon experience. Riches, honors, and pleasures, which include all the world can give, can afford no comfort in the gloom of death, nor procure one moment's respite to the fearful mind. In this war there is no discharge; not real excellence itself, not the righteous and blessed man, of whom we have been discoursing, is exempted.

Since the death of righteous Abel to this present moment, only two of the descendants of Adam, have been honored to enter the gates of bliss, without the body entering the regions of corruption; nor is it to be expected any more will be added to the number till the first resurrection, when, as the apostle expresses it, "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed."

My dear brethren, this day bears witness, that if love unfeigned, accompanied with fervent prayer to God, could have prevailed to obtain a longer date on earth for one of God's honored and faithful ministers, this office had not been mine; that mournful situation had not been yours.

But though the righteous die as well as others, they do not die as others do. The wicked die against their will; their souls, if I may be allowed the expression, are forced out of their bodies; and this seems

to be the wise man's meaning when he says, "The wicked is driven away in his wickedness," Prov. xiv. 32. driven from the body to the bar of God, from thence to hell to be tormented with devils for ever and ever. Not such the departure of the righteous; his exit is in peace, and he goes to enjoy the presence of the Prince of peace in heaven. As for him to live, is Christ; so to die, is gain. The dear Redeemer, that has the keys of death and hell, takes them to himself, that they may behold his glory. I read, when the barren fig-tree was to be removed out of the vineyard (the church of God) the sentence was, "Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?" Luke xiii. 7. As if God had said, Death, hew down that tree, and tumble the brand out of the world into the fire.

You read in scripture of trees of righteousness; one of them is held forth in the text; but not a word about cutting down, no: it is taken away; removed from the garden below to the paradise above. God indeed, for wise ends, often permits the wicked to die, as to outward appearance, in serenity and peace, without much pain of body, and without discovering any distress of mind, or fear of misery. While, on the other hand, he visits the righteous man with acute pains of body, and permits the enemy of souls, even in the very close of life, to disturb his peace, accuse his conscience, and fill his soul with fears. The ease with which many die, it is to be feared, is not because their state is safe, but because they are ignorant of their danger, unacquainted with the evil of sin, the worth of their immortal souls—the nature and perfections of that righteous Judge, into whose presence they are going: they close their eyes in security, and open them in that place of torment, where not a drop of water can be obtained to cool their tongues for ever. And I am fully persuaded, God's visitations

of his own people are sometimes of such a nature as forbid their discovering to others the comforts they experience in their souls. A christian on his death-bed may have his soul filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory; and, through the afflictions and infirmities of nature, not the least appearance of it be visible to us. God may permit many that are precious in his sight, thus to go out of life for his church's good, that hypocrites may fear and be converted, and with full purpose of heart turn to the Lord; that slumbering lukewarm christians may trim their lamps, watch and be zealous, sit loose to the world, and wait daily for their Master's coming. The righteous are not all taken away at the same age of life, nor by the same way; some are called home in youth, perhaps converted and glorified in the same year; others arrive at compleat manhood; and others are carried even to old age. The almond-tree flourishes on their head, before they lay it in the dust. One of God's children may lay a long season as one free among the dead, expecting to die daily, and yet may be upheld in life year after year; another may be called home in an instant, and before his friends perceive their loss, partake of the pleasures that flow at God's right hand for evermore. The Lord has a right to call his people home, *when and how* he pleases; our times are in his hand, and he does all things well. Nor are any of his children called by death till he has made them meet for heaven. Dr. Gill, I think, observes, the words may be rendered 'the righteous are gathered,' which, connected with the following part of the verse, seems to allude to the careful husbandman gathering in his corn before the storm approaches. A similar text you will find in the book of Job. "Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in, in his season," Job v. 26.

The righteous is taken away from *evils* to which in this pilgrimage he is exposed. A wandering and cold heart, a forgetful memory and vain desires, though often found in the best men on earth, are *evils* unknown in heaven, nor one vain thought is felt by all the inhabitants of the celestial city. The body of sin and death, under which, while in this tabernacle, he groans, being hurried on he is at death delivered from for ever. The wiles and temptations of satan, the workings of corrupt nature, and the carnal reasonings of the mind, are there concluded. The reproaches of the ungodly are then at an end. The various afflictions with which he was once visited, often very grievous to nature, now happily terminate in eternal rest. In a word, as the apostle expresses it, "Mortality is swallowed up of life," 2 Cor. v. 4. But it is not past evils or calamities, but future, the text seems to speak of, and from which the righteous man at death is taken away. And, perhaps, my honored Brother, gone to rest, had some impressions of mind that many evils and calamities, the world are little aware of, would shortly overtake them. Be that as it may, it is certain, the Lord's removal of so many glorious lights out of his candlesticks in so short a time, looks with a dismal aspect to Great Britain in general, and to the inhabitants of London in particular*. God's voice to his churches this day is evidently the same sent by his messenger John to the church of Sardis: "Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee," Rev. iii. 3. The times are not only *hard*, but what is worse, *sinful*.

* 'It is a sign God intends war, when he calls home his ambassadors.' HENRY.

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ful: the former is the effect of the latter. The Lord wants not for instruments to punish sin; his quiver is full of arrows to shoot at his enemies; and his nature is at his command. Our very comforts may become our curse; our mercies, despised, turn to our destruction.

It may with propriety be applied to England, what God says concerning Israel of old, "What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done, in it? Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?" Isa. v. 4. We boast of liberty, and are slaves to the devil and sin. We enjoy peace in our borders, and are at war with an omnipotent God. Vice rides triumphant in our streets, while religion droops her head, and sits in mourning weeds. The nurseries for hell, and places of riot and dissipation are increasing every year. The worship of God is neglected, his gospel ridiculed, and his people despised; the playhouses are crowded, iniquity exalted, and all manner of sin practised, even the abominable sin of Sodom and plague of Gomorrah not excepted. Was public credit ever at a lower ebb? was oppression ever so common, the distresses of the poor so great, or the cries of the needy so piercing as at this present day? Nor is the religious world, so called, in a much better state; for many, who have a zeal for God, are ignorant of Jesus Christ in his person, characters, and offices, their hearts being unbroken, and as such can have no fellowship with the broken-hearted Saviour. "The whole need not the physician, but they that are sick," Matt. ix. 12.

It is for want of broken hearts and wounded consciences that so many, after professing Christ, turn back to the world. And I am bold to declare, that among the many societies and congregations in London, few, very few, hold the truth as it is in Jesus.

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We may justly apply the words of the Jewish governor, Nehemiah, to the present time, "The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed, and there is also much rubbish." Rubbish in the ministers' doctrine, but more in the peoples' practice. "Iniquity abounds, and the love of many waxes cold."

You would be hard put to it, to find out many professors to be such, except you meet them in the church on meeting; their discourse, their dress, their practice differs nothing from the world, except when attending public worship. And as my Rev. Brother, in whose place I stand, in conversation once observed, "The business of christians in general seems to be done under the pulpit, but there is no business done to purpose but under the cross of Christ."

That this state of things is as *true* as *dismal*, daily experience bears testimony. And was God "to lay judgment to the line, and righteousness to the plummet, the spirit would fail before him, and the soul that he has formed." But happy, thrice happy they, let the storm come when it will, who are safely landed in the harbour of eternal peace.

God, in all ages of the world, has given instances of his care and love to his distinguished saints, in taking them out of the way of danger, or preserving them in it: Thus, before he destroyed the antediluvian world, Noah, his faithful servant, and preacher of righteousness, was provided with an ark; and, to confirm his faith in being perfectly safe, we read, "The Lord shut him in," Gen. vii. 16. So also we find, before the fierce anger of God was poured out on Sodom and Gomorrah, by destroying them with fire and brimstone from heaven, his favourite servant Lot must be brought out and lodged safe in Zoar;

* This part of conversation was intended to be publicly delivered, but was, through the treachery of memory, forgotten.

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"I, says the Lord Jesus, the Angel of the Covenant (who was Lot's deliverer) can do nothing till thou be come thither." Gen. xix. 22. As if he had said, My arm is limited from executing vengeance on my foes, till my *beloved child* is safe. So king Josiah, when told of the judgments to be executed on the land of Judah, had this assurance for his comfort, that "he should go to his grave in peace, and not behold this evil that was coming on the land." 2 Kings xxii. 20.

Whatever scenes of trouble, distress or woe, any of us may live to see befall this kingdom and country, our dear brother is taken away beyond the reach of all. And as your instructor and teacher in the things of God, there are many evils that may happen in this church in future, (you will be singularly happy if they do not) from which he, thro' mercy, is now delivered. These evils I, and many other of God's ministers, have yet to grapple with, in a greater or lesser degree. And methinks the feelings and fears of my own breast will furnish me with a few hints to offer to your consideration. What think you, Sirs, of a minister's desiring and endeavouring, as far as in him lies, the profit and soul advantage of his hearers; and, instead of helping him by their fervent prayers to God in his behalf, that the word preached may profit them, they seem to loathe the heavenly manna, seldom give him the hearing; or if they do attend public worship, they come in so cold and unconcerned a way, as plainly shews they have forgot their errand; and that it is all one to them whether they meet with God or not? This evil your pastor is now delivered from. Every bosom swells with love to God in that triumphant church into which he is entered. What think you of the evil of strife and debate, among brethren of the same communion? It is a sore evil indeed; nor is there

there any way by which Satan does more advance his cause than this. It offends the weak and feeble of Christ's flock, who ought to be comforted and strengthened in love. It grieves the heavenly Dove, the Spirit of God, and gives occasion to the enemies of Christ to blaspheme. It fills the minister's heart with anguish that words cannot describe. — It stops his mouth, bows down his soul, and makes him labour in the fire. From this evil the righteous are taken away. Whether they be preachers or hearers on earth, they all agree in heaven, singing salvation, glory, and honor to the Lamb for ever and ever.

What think you of being wounded in the house of your friend, experiencing that those who greet you with to the face, shall speak all manner of evil of you privately behind your back; after being seemingly very affectionate and familiar, shall become not only *fly*, but *fly*, and endeavor, even for all your kindness shewn in love to them, to do you all the prejudice they can by any means effect? This spirit of guile and deceit is not yet banished out of the world. But the righteous are taken away from this evil, and find in glory none but friends, whose hearts are perfectly pure and holy.

Once more in this particular, and I have done. The declensions and backslidings of professors are grievous, and sore trials to God's people, and especially to his ministers. To see them you thought could endure any trial better than yourself, drawn aside by every temptation of the enemy; to see those who once were full of zeal for God and his ways, whose feet were always first at the house of God, whose hearts seemed melted like wax under the word preached; whose souls seemed to be drawn forth to communion with God in prayer; to see these you once beheld with pleasure and delight, turn their backs on you in the street; their hearts hardened through
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the deceitfulness of sin. Their mouths blaspheming the name of him, who, in solemn prayer, they have often addressed as the only delight of their soul. Is an evil to be lamented with a witness. But this evil, affecting as it is, the righteous man is delivered from, having been kept by the power of God thro' faith unto salvation; all scenes of woe, and causes of sorrow are done away for ever. My dear hearers, I cannot pass this awful view of evils that may come among us, without addressing you of this assembly, who through grace own and acknowledge Mr. Hughes as your father in the gospel. Some of you are now but babes in Christ; your zeal is great; your love, you think, is strong, and you doubt not the reality of your faith: but, my dear friends, remember faith must be tried; you are not yet acquainted with the devices of Satan, that subtle foe. The world may, perhaps, e'er long change the nature of its address to your hearts. Instead of frowning it may smile; and, believe me, your own deceitful hearts will often incline to the enemy's side. Where then is your defence? In the captain of your salvation; look to him, and he will establish you. But should any of you be the cause of that evil in this church which I last mentioned, methinks the reflection of your worthy pastor's removal before this evil, cannot but affect your hearts amidst your eager pursuits of vanity. Methinks, when singing the drunkard's song, it will occur, "Ah, had that dear man, under whose ministry I sat, and with whose congregation I joined in singing the praises of redeeming love, lived to see some in this way and course, it would have been as a dagger to his heart, and filled his soul with sorrow." But remember, whatever course you take, his course is finished, and with exceeding joy. O! how different our sabbath on earth, and that which he enjoys above. The

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greatest part of this assembly are arrayed in black, while he is clothed in white linen, the righteousness of the saints. Some of our eyes overflow with tears; his tears are wiped away for ever; we are now weary, but he is at rest.

It is, I think, high time for me now to illustrate the doctrines already delivered, by the living experience, and death of that righteous man who is taken away from us. I may truly say, as Israel's king concerning Abner, "A prince, and a great man is fallen in Israel:" for, as a prince he had power with God, and prevailed for blessings to himself and others. He was exalted to intimate communion with the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ, through the anointings of the Holy Spirit of truth.

I have in providence had the opportunity of seeing three princes of the glorious august house of Hanover, buried in the sepulchre of their fathers, and heard the herald at arms proclaim the many illustrious titles and honors with which in life they were invested, and which, as to them, were lost for ever. Not such the honor that comes from God: Not death itself can rob the christian of his possessions. This my deceased friend has found. Called by grace to the adoption of a son, he now enjoys an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. Made a king and priest to God on earth, he now reigns triumphant in the kingdom prepared for him before the foundation of the world.

It pleased God, who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will, to call him early in youth to walk in the strait and narrow path that leads to life. And as he had ordained him to endure a long and tedious pilgrimage in life, he gave him for his support, even in his youthful days, this rich and precious promise, "Fear not, I am with thee; be not dis-

dismayed, for I am thy God. I will strengthen thee, yea I will help thee, yea I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." Isaiah xli. 10. And also a cordial to his soul in time of distress, that glorious word, "I will never leave thee, I will never, never forsake thee." Heb. xiii. 5. Nor is it to be wondered at, that finding through his *walk with God*, which was a series of near sixty years, these promises made good to his own soul. In his public ministrations he was led to expatiate with inward pleasure and delight, on the eternal unchangeable love of God which passes knowledge. Carried in the bosom of mercy all his days, he would often praise his gracious Lord, who kept him through the whole tenor of his life from bringing any reproach on that blessed gospel he professed and preached, experiencing the power of the apostle's words, "Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God with your bodies and spirits which are his."

He was a tree of righteousness, tall and flourishing, in the house of God, deeply rooted in faith and love. And though for many years despised and neglected, by those who envied the gifts and graces the Saviour had bestowed on him, he endured all with a becoming christian fortitude. His bow abode in strength, and his arms were made strong by the mighty God of Jacob, the shepherd and stone of Israel, who in his own time (having previously endowed him with every necessary qualification) brought the industrious man to be a labourer in his vineyard; and you, beloved, are living witnesses of his success and care, while he continued in the same. He testified the grace of God in truth. He copied no man after the flesh. The Lord gave him a method of preaching peculiar to himself. His words and expressions were always plain, and might be understood by the meanest capacity. His preaching was not with en-

ticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration
 of the Spirit, and of power. He was fully convinced
 of the impossibility of carrying on gospel ordinances
 without divine assistance. And hence his general
 method of study was on his knees. His support, he
 often said, was leaning on his *beloved's arm*; his
 earthly vessel was often filled with heavenly treasure;
 and when he found familiarity with heaven, his heart
 was enlarged to display the Redeemer's glories in a won-
 derful manner to others; yet it pleased the Lord many
 times to try him as by fire; for even after spending
 the night in earnest cries and supplications to God,
 for a word in season to carry to his flock, he has
 come out on a Lord's-day morning, having three
 sermons to preach, and not a text of scripture im-
 pressed on his mind. But in the Mount of the Lord
 it was seen; for even here he found the Lord's name
 Jehovah Jirah. When weak in himself, he found
 the joy of the Lord was his strength. And he once
 told me, that at such times there was generally a
 time of refreshing among you from the presence of
 the Lord. May God make you thankful for them,
 and give you to experience them more abundantly!

He was eminently qualified for administering con-
 solation to a tempted and desponding soul. He was
 not ignorant of Satan's devices. Many, that have
 gone hanging down their heads like bulrushes from
 year to year, the Lord has been pleased to comfort,
 and set at liberty, under his word. He led poor
 tempted souls as by the hand, through all the accu-
 sations of Satan, law and conscience, to the peace-
 speaking blood of Christ, and almighty power of
 God, engaged in covenant, for the support of the
 poor and needy. Few of God's children, nay few
 of God's ministers, are led to such deep views of
 that cursed iniquity that remains even in the hearts
 of the regenerate, as he was favoured with: he well
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knew how apt we are to look for comfort and peace from ourselves, and therefore always warned his hearers from depending on their frames and feelings of mind, as the ground of God's love to them; as when this happy season was over and gone, distress and anguish of soul would naturally follow, if Jesus was not beheld as the Alpha and Omega of their salvation.

When your worthy pastor gave himself up to the Lord and you, it was without reserve. Gladly did he labour, and spend his life among you. The sorrows of your breasts were his. And as a tender affectionate father, he could not bear to see any of you his dear children in grief, but he was made partaker of the same. Many of you, I am informed, have been sorely vexed by the enemy of your peace; and your pastor's mind, at such times, was bowed down with trouble. He constantly carried your case before the Lord in prayer, and has often praised his name, that he enabled him to be a means of comforting others when he needed it himself. He could with propriety use the apostle's words, "Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I burn not?" And notwithstanding (from many) he met with very ungrateful returns for his kindness, he regarded not his life to supply their lack of service.

I cannot better describe his fervent zeal and unwearied diligence in his master's work, than in his own words, as he delivered them concerning his dear brother and predecessor Mr. Hart. "As the laborious ox that dies with his yoke on his neck, so did he with the yoke of Christ on his neck; nor would he suffer it to be taken off; for when his wife and friends would intreat him to spare himself, he would answer in the words of pious Bunyan, "Had I ten thousand gallons of blood in my veins, I could spill
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it freely for Jesus Christ. And had I as many lives to spend, they should all be spent in the service of my bleeding loving Saviour and his church." When through weakness of body, his ministerial employ was too heavy for him, and his affectionate wife and children intreated him not to preach, he said, "I was ordained a minister from the womb; my soul is wrapped up in the work. I love to draw water for the Lord's congregation; and so long as my divine Master has work for me to do, he will enable me to do it."

The last Lord's-day he was in this pulpit, he preached three times: The Lord's-day following, providence brought me among you to assist him; and though desired to stay at home, he would come out to hearing in the afternoon, saying, "Do let me go; do let me go; I love to see the children." If I remember right the word of instruction I preached from was, "He that openeth." Rev. iii. 7. Words that he has now fully experienced; for his divine Master has opened the door of his earthly tabernacle, and took his longing soul to rest. That evening he was taken so ill, as to be obliged to keep his bed, and continued in London five weeks before he went into the country; which being often pressed to do, before he consented, he would say, "My country-house is in Jewin-street, and with my Saviour's leave, I want no other." Five weeks he continued in the country, experiencing all the while excruciating pains from the weakness of his inside, and a violent fever constantly attending it. Yet in his patience he possessed his soul; and when his pangs were very violent, he would sometimes say, "I cannot think why my heavenly Father lays so much on me, except, as George Whitefield used to say, "It is to make heaven the sweeter to me." And in this hap-

py aspiring frame, he would break out in singing those well-known lines :

“ Jesus, lover of my soul,
Let me to thy bosom fly,
While the nearer waters roll,
While the tempest still is high :
Hide me, O my Saviour, hide,
’Till the storm of life is past,
Safe into the haven guide,
O receive my soul at last !”

He had endured sore buffetings of Satan through the course of his journey in the wilderness. Sometimes walking in darkness, and having no light ; yet was enabled by faith to trust on the Lord, and “ stay upon his God.” Isaiah l. 10. And would in such cases often pray, “ Dear Father, let me have a song in the house of my pilgrimage.” The Lord often heard him, granted his request, and enabled him to write experimental poems †, suitable to his state and condition ; among which was one entitled, “ The Pilgrim ;” which he desired might be sung by his wife and family, when he was near his end. The conclusion of which is this :

There my long toilsome journey ends,
And I no more shall roam.
Farewel, my children, wife, and friends ;
I now am safe at home.

In time of health he would often ask, “ If it was the will of God, that when he was to pass over Jordan to the promised land, the waters might be shallow, and the ark of the covenant go before him.” All

† Mr. Hughes’s poetical writings are intended to be made public for the benefit of God’s dear people.

which

which his Lord in mercy granted; for he frequently told his visitors, and the dear partner of his cares, "that not a dog of the pit was suffered to wag his tongue during the whole course of his sickness." Just before his departure, he thanked God "that his sun did not set in a cloud, but that it was bright day in the valley of the shadow of death." It pleased the sovereign Lord of all to take him to his arms the 29th day of May, at half past twelve in the morning, a blood vessel bursting in his inside, casting his life out of that mouth which had so often in this place conveyed the word of life to your precious souls.

"Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace." * Psal. xxxvii, 37. "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his."

And now, my Christian auditors, what think you of these things? Perhaps some one may be ready to object, and reply, You have said a great deal concerning him. It is true, I have; but many here present know I have not said too much. But, dear Sirs, do not mistake me; my intent, so far as I am concerned in this days work, is not to praise the man, but to exalt the grace of God, who called, justified, sanctified, supported, and made him what he was. Doubtless Mr. Hughes was a man of like passions with ourselves; he was attended with infirmities and failings as well as others; but knowing in whom he believed, that Jesus was his beloved friend and advocate, he, in his last moments bore testimony that all his salvation was of grace, saying, "I have no other refuge for my immortal soul than this, God loved me from all eter-

* The last time I heard Mr. Hughes preach, was at Mitcham in Surry, from these words of the Psalmist. His labours there have been greatly blessed, and owned of God; and his memory, I am fully persuaded, will ever be dear to the faithful in Christ Jesus meeting at that place.

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nity, loved me when a sinner in my blood, and will love me for ever." * A noble testimony indeed! Well might he depart in peace, his soul thus centered in "the rock of ages."

Although I hinted in the beginning of this discourse, that I have reason to believe the general part of this congregation are impressed with a due sense of the loss of so good and useful a man; yet in so crowded an assembly as this, brought together, no doubt, by various motives, it is more than probable, there may be *some*, though I hope not *many*, that instead of having any concern on account of his death, are glad it happened; and were they to express the inward sentiments of their minds, it would be something to this effect, "What a set of fools and madmen are here! to make all this ado, about the death of an old enthusiastic Baptist Preacher? I must needs confess, I never liked him in my life; I have often in my own mind wished him gone, and that the world were well rid of him." Well, Sirs, you have your wish; you will never see or hear him in this place again: but let me tell you, he is taken away from that "wrath to come," 1 Thess. i. 10. which, except you repent, you must lie under to all eternity. Permit me to ask you in the words of the prophet in the 4th verse of the chapter out of which the text is taken, "Against whom do you sport yourselves?"

* Should any on reading this passage be offended, as supposing God cannot love any man, while under the guilt of sin; and that it is when we forsake sin that God begins to love us; it may be sufficient to reply, that though God cannot love sin in his creatures, he both can, and does, love his creatures that are sinners, prior to their loving and serving him; or else not one of all the human race would ever love him. The testimony of the beloved disciple, and the apostle Paul, I think are a sufficient proof of this: The former declares, 1 John iv. 19, "We love him because he first loved us;" the latter, in his epistle to the Ephesians, chap. ii. 4. 5. says, "God who is rich in mercy, for the great love wherewith he loved us, even when dead in sins," &c. &c.

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against whom make you a wide mouth, and draw out the tongue?" Is it against God's messengers only? No: It is against him "that is able to cast both body and soul into hell," Matt. x. 28. there is no sporting there, only "weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth." God has declared concerning his ministers, "He that receiveth you receiveth *me*, and he that despiseth you despiseth *me*," Luke x. 16. How do you think the quarrel will end at last? certainly in your own destruction. "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little: blessed are all they that put their trust in him," Psalm ii. 12. The same God that has a bosom for his lilies, has a furnace for the tares.

You have, my brethren, heard this day of a righteousness by which poor wretched sinners are justified before God, are pardoned and accepted, only on account of this righteousness being imputed to them, agreeable to the testimony of the apostle: "He has made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made"—what? The righteousness of a first-rate saint? No. The righteousness of an archangel? No. "The righteousness of God in him?" 2 Cor. v. 21. Is this righteousness your whole, entire dependence? Have you no other stay for the support of your soul in trouble than this, "Jesus has lived and died for me?" If so, you are happy; let Death come when he will, you are safe; you may go down to the dust without fear: "all things are yours; whether life or death, things present or things to come, all are yours; for ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's," 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23.

But, ah! how many are there that speak of this glorious righteousness with their mouths, who are too proud to submit to it with their hearts? I know this by my own past experience: and many professors of this present day, that talk of gospel truths, yet speak
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of *this* in such a way, as plainly declares they have never seen its glories, nor tasted its comforts. Believe me, Sirs, till you are enabled to let go your hope of salvation, in whole or part, by the obedience of the law, your sins and iniquities will not only *fight* against you, but *reign* in you. The victory is gained through Jesus Christ our Lord; having nothing in yourself, you will enjoy all in Christ.

O that every proud self righteous mind would but seriously reflect on the nature and demands of the law, by which they hope to stand, they would, seeing the plague of the heart, rejoice that God had thus provided in covenant a righteousness equal to the wants of man, the demands of the law, and requirements of justice; and would say with the prophet, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God, for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with jewels," Isa. lxi. 10.

I shall now speak a few words for the comfort of the dear relict, and beloved children of the deceased. You, dear madam, have lost a loving husband, and faithful partner of your griefs; a sweet companion not only in temporal, but spiritual affairs: And, I doubt not, had it been the will of God, as you comfortably lived, so you could have died with him. Whither he is gone, ye know, and the way ye know. The Lord, whose he was, and whom he served, has sent his messenger, and took him from the evils of this mortal state, to reign with him in heaven; and it will not be long ere the same messenger is sent for you: and then, that dear saint, who fell asleep within your arms, will bid you welcome to the arms of Christ.*

* As it was found impossible to add the Address at the Interment of my Rev. brother to this discourse, without enhancing the price, I have in this place taken the liberty of introducing a few of the sentences that were delivered at the grave.

Though ranked among the widows on earth, you have an everlasting husband in heaven. You, in your present state, are not alone; Jesus has many widows in Israel to provide for besides yourself: and if you reflect how many are left widows in the most deplorable circumstances, and, what is worse than all, strangers to a providing Saviour, you will have reason to sing of mercy as well as judgment. Now, he on whom you leaned for support, and to whom you could lay open all your heart, is taken away from you. I hope you will be enabled to lean on your dear Saviour's arms by faith from day to day, and tell him all your griefs; and doubt not but he, who from the mercy-seat has communed with your husband, will be as kind to you. As the time is drawing near when you must follow him, may you in the interim be enabled to meditate much on the celestial world. Methinks the subject must be sweet when you reflect, that one so near your heart is now an inhabitant of the blissful mansions; for which happy state, may Jesus by his grace prepare you!

Dear youths, who lament a pious tender father, a heavenly guide, and faithful monitor to your souls, sorrow not, as those without hope. Your father's God, I trust, is yours. It should be considered by you as a peculiar blessing, you were *not*, as many *are*, bereaved of your father before you were enabled to provide things necessary for yourselves. Born of godly parents, and blessed with all needful things for the body, I trust you know "the one thing needful for your souls;" and, I doubt not, but in your passage through life, you will meet with many blessings in a way of providence for your dear father's sake: All that knew that honest man will wish you well, and shew you kindness on his account; so says Solomon, "the just man walketh in his integrity, his children are blessed after him," Prov. xx. 7. How cheering must it be in times of temptation, distress, and

and trouble, to reflect, this is the path my honoured father trod, I trace his footsteps in the barren sand, and through Jehovah's help, will never despair, but persevere till I arrive safe at the same glorious place, the inheritance of the purchased possession. In all your conflicts, inward and outward, you know the way your father gained the victory, namely, by letting his requests be made known unto God. In this may you be enabled to follow his example. Remember the duty you owe to your honoured mother, comfort and help her to the utmost of your power, and do not any thing you know will grieve her; and may the blessing you received from your dying father on earth, be confirmed by your Father who is in heaven.

It now remains that I address myself to you, the members and subscribers of this church. And let me put you in remembrance, that if the shepherd, useful as he *was*, is taken away to an invisible state, so also must the sheep. Do the ministers of Christ quit the world, and leave their work to others? so also must the merchant, tradesman, and mechanic. Remember this, you that are joined in conjugal relation to each other, a parting-time will shortly come. Look, ye faithful wives and tender mothers, at the widow of your late pastor, and shed a tear of sympathy with her, whose case may be your own, God only knows how soon. And, O! that all of you, high and low, rich and poor together, would consider this event as calling you to examine what improvement you have made of his abode with you, and ministry among you! The ardent wish no doubt is poured out of many breasts, O! that I could but once more hear him testify, "A bleeding Saviour's love;" I would hang with pleasure on every sentence. My very heart is pained to think how formal I have sat beneath his soul-searching sermons! And may not others say they were fed too well, and now know the worth of
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an heart-affecting preacher by the want of him? Every one, I doubt not, would have been glad he had recovered, and visited this place again. But God has ordered it otherwise. He, as a minister, is to you of this congregation, for ever lost. Jesus has taken him to himself; and he has a far greater claim to him than you; for he shed his precious blood to make him his; and he now speaks to you as to Israel of old, "Be still, and know that I am God." Psalm xlv. 10.

The blow, I know, is heavy; the loss is great; but remember this is not the *first* shining light God has taken from you. And when he took experienced HART, did he forsake you? No, nor will he now. Zion, in her affliction, may, through unbelief, be ready to say, "the Lord hath forsaken me, and my God hath forgotten me." But hear the answer the Lord sends for her comfort: "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget; yet will I not forget thee. Behold I have graven thee on the palms of my hands; all thy walls are continually before me." Isaiah xlix. 14, 15, & 16. Though your ministers die as men, yet Jesus, the bridegroom and head of his church, ever lives. The government is on his shoulders, and he has promised, "he will give them pastors according to his heart." Jer. iii. 15. Nor can all the learned men on earth, nor angels in heaven, make a minister of the New Testament; that is the Redeemer's work alone, who, "when he ascended up on high received gifts for men," Psalm lxviii. 18. Nor need you fear his care of you. The Lord will not forsake his people for his great name's sake, because it pleased the Lord to make them his people. 1 Sam. xii. 22. It was matter of inward joy to your deceased pastor, that he lived to see this church settled, and fixed to his mind. And I hope
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it is a church built on the rock Christ; and then be assured "the gates of hell shall never prevail against it." Matt. xvi. 18.

That gracious man, in whose place I stand, gave it in charge, that I should not forget to exhort you to wait the Lord's leisure, and not be hasty in choosing another to settle among you (for though there be ten thousand instructors in Christ Jesus, there are not many fathers). And especially he desired you would elect one who would not confine your souls to a certain standard of experience, but press home the secret of the Lord to be with them that fear him. A secret Mr. Hughes was acquainted with. And hence he would often say, "He feared many of his hearers did not comprehend him, that if ever he shot over their heads, it was when he spoke of the deep things of God." Had I not had this charge to deliver, relating to your choice of a pastor, I durst not have presumed to give you my advice, when I consider how admirably this is done in one of your hymns :

" Christian, dost thou want a teacher,
 Helper, counsellor, or guide?
 Wouldst thou find a proper preacher?
 Ask thy God; and he'll provide.
 Build on no man's parts or merit,
 But behold the gospel-plan:
 Jesus sends his Holy Spirit;
 And the Spirit sends the man."

There is one thing I beg leave to recommend to your serious consideration: Namely, That as during your minister's sickness you had a meeting once a week, for fervent prayer in his behalf, you would continue it on in behalf of yourselves. He, blest saint, needs not your prayers; he is not, as the Papists dream, confined in purgatory, but at rest in heaven,

heaven, and sees his Saviour face to face. But you are in a dark and mournful state, wait then on God by hearty prayer; and, for your encouragement, I would inform you, it is recorded in the word of God, that ere the lamp of God was gone out in the temple of the Lord, "the Lord called Samuel." 1 Sam. iii. 3, 4. On which a Jewish Rabbi has this comment: "Before the Lord puts out the light of one prophet, he calls and sets up another." And this I am persuaded you will by experience find true. Some of you may perhaps be called out of life before another minister is called to your charge: But if you sleep in Jesus, you will have part in the first resurrection, and reign a thousand years with Christ on earth. The millennium was matter of sweet meditation to my honored brother, gone to bliss; and in this respect he and I do perfectly agree. O! happy time, when the Lord my God shall come, and all his saints with him. Zechariah xiv. 5. When we shall all have one worship and language; follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. Rev. xiv. 4. And not a pricking briar, nor grieving thorn, nor a Canaanite be in the house of my God for ever.

I have now fulfilled the last request of my honored friend: Whether I have succeeded to your wishes, I know not; but I am happy in this, that I have fully discharged my conscience; and that dear Saviour who has received him, with a "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord," Matt. xxv. 21. I doubt not, will one day say the same to me. I shall conclude all in the words of the apostle Paul, "Finally, brethren, farewell, be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace, and the God of love and peace shall be with you." 2 Cor. xiii. 11. Amen.



